



Opening Statement

May 13, 2015

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Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Scott Perry (R-PA) Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency

“Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 1615, H.R. 1626, H.R. 1633, H.R. 1640, and H.R. 1646”

Remarks as Prepared

I’m pleased to hold this markup today to consider five bills which will better safeguard taxpayer dollars and increase transparency and accountability of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I appreciate Ranking Member Watson Coleman and the other members of the Subcommittee for their commitment to work collaboratively on these bills.

The first bill under consideration is H.R. 1633, the *DHS Paid Administrative Leave Accountability Act*, sponsored by Mr. Loudermilk of Georgia. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), paid administrative leave, which is defined as an excused absence without the loss of pay or charge to the individual, cost DHS \$380 million from fiscal years 2011 through 2013. During this same period, GAO found over 70 DHS employees were on paid leave for over a year, some of who were being investigated for misconduct. This bill requires DHS to better track employees on paid leave for misconduct matters and report to Congress on the costs associated with this leave.

The second bill under consideration is H.R. 1615, the *DHS FOIA Efficiency Act*, sponsored by Mr. Carter of Georgia. The Freedom of Information Act, known as FOIA, provides the public an important tool to ensure government is transparent and accountable. Notably, DHS processes the most FOIA requests of any federal agency and half of all backlogged federal FOIA requests belong to DHS. This legislation takes common sense steps to make DHS’s process more efficient and hence increase transparency and accountability.

Next, we’ll consider two other bills: H.R. 1640, the *DHS Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act*, sponsored by Mr. Walker of North Carolina and H.R. 1626, the *DHS IT Duplication Reduction Act*, sponsored by Mr. Hurd of Texas. Mr. Walker’s bill will increase accountability and improve the management of a multi-billion dollar project to construct a consolidated DHS headquarters in Southeast Washington, D.C. Having recently toured the site, I believe this bill will help safeguard taxpayer dollars

moving forward. Mr. Hurd's bill focuses on reducing unnecessary duplication of Information Technology (IT) systems across DHS. According to GAO, DHS plans to spend about \$6 billion on ongoing IT programs. We must ensure that we're not spending taxpayer dollars to duplicate these expensive systems.

Finally, we'll consider H.R. 1646, the *Homeland Security Drone Assessment Act*, sponsored by the Subcommittee's Ranking Member, Ms. Watson Coleman. I held a hearing in March to examine threats from small, unmanned aerial systems (UAS) – or drones. The hearing followed concerning incidents of a small drone landing on the White House lawn and others flying over key Paris landmarks. Although DHS has taken some steps to educate law enforcement and the public on small UAS, much more must be done. This bill mandates DHS to research this threat and have federal agencies take actions to prevent and mitigate drone attacks.

I extend my thanks to the members of the Committee for their work on these bills. The legislation we consider at today's markup will increase accountability, better safeguard taxpayer dollars, and improve the management of DHS.

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